

**GRANT COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Chairman: Bill Bailey
Vice Chairman:
Board Members: Carol Dawson, Terry Dorsing, Ann Drader, Blair Fuglie and Kevin Richards
Secretary: Doris Long

COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM - GRANT COUNTY COURTHOUSE, EPHRATA, WASHINGTON

JANUARY 17, 2018 @ 7:00 P.M.

2018 Attendance

NAME	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
BAILEY	W											
DAWSON	P											
DORSING	W											
DRADER	W											
FUGLIE	P											
RICHARDS	W											

P=Present

A=Absent

C=Canceled

W=Webex

NM=No Meeting Held

Chairman, Bill Bailey, opens the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Planning Commissioners, Bill Bailey, Ann Drader and Kevin Richards, are attending the meeting via Webex. Blair Fuglie and Carol Dawson are present in the hearing room, along with Ben Floyd, of White Bluffs Consulting, and Development Services Director, Damien Hooper.

Board Action:

Approval of December 6, 2017 Planning Commission minutes.

Mr. Richards moves to approve the minutes as presented.

Ms. Dawson seconds the motion.

ACTION: Kevin Richards moves to approve the December 6, 2017 minutes.

Carol Dawson seconds the motion.

Voted on and passes unanimously.

Mr. Bailey suggests waiting to elect 2018 officers until the February 7th meeting, when more Planning Commission members are present in person.

Mr. Hooper agrees to wait.

Mr. Floyd reports they will be reviewing the Natural Setting Element, the Economic Development Element and the Critical Areas Code. As in previous sections, outdated and duplicated information has been removed.

Mr. Dorsing asks if the language being removed should be needed for future reference, will it be maintained.

Mr. Floyd confirms that the redlined versions will be saved. He adds, if they feel information was removed that should have been kept, it can very easily be undeleted and saved.

CHAPTER 13 NATURAL SETTING ELEMENT

13.1 INTRODUCTION

13.1.1 Purpose of Element

Information that is out dated, or was a precursor to the Unified Development Code, was removed, and select text was moved to more suitable sections. The chapters contained a lot of unnecessary detail, making the document too wordy.

13.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

13.2.1 Natural Setting

The six watersheds, and how the Columbia Basin Project heavily influences the land AG use, hydrology and habitat are discussed here.

13.2.1.1 Climate

Integrated information in from the Shoreline Master Program Inventory Analysis and Characterization Report.

13.2.1.2 Topography

General summary; much of the detailed information was proposed to be removed.

Mr. Floyd suggests that the verbiage marked to be removed should be left in.

The Planning Commission agrees.

The following language detailing the County's topography will remain in the updated version.

"The Grand Coulee, which contains Banks Lake, Park Lake, Blue Lake, Lake Lenore and Soap Lake, dissects the hills along the northwestern County line. The Columbia River flows along the southwestern and south boundaries of the County.

The Beezley Hills, which are west of Ephrata and north of Quincy, trend generally east-west along the transition between the rolling hills and plains. The Frenchman-Hills separate the plains south of Quincy and Royal Slope. Crab Creek lies between Royal Slope and the Saddle Mountains to the south. Wahluke Slope is bounded by the Saddle Mountains and the Columbia River. Evergreen Ridge, Babcock Bench and Babcock Ridge trend generally north-south along the east side of the Columbia River."

13.2.1.3 Soils

Language was added from the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

13.2.2 Water Resources

13.2.2.1 Introduction

Columbia Basin Project

ESA-listed species needs

Municipal groundwater supply

Rural groundwater supply

Ms. Drader asks if the County has regulations setting the minimum depth for the drilling of a well.

Mr. Hooper replies that there is not anything adopted locally. There is the component of where water actually exists that has to be considered. This can vary widely from one parcel to the next.

Mr. Floyd reports that EA West, a hydrogeology firm, is preparing a memo to supplement the water resources discussion. This is in preparation for changes possibly being made to the regulations applying to permit exempt wells.

Mr. Dorsing requests to have the following statement clarified.

If the County is to sustain growth, every resident and jurisdiction must meet the ongoing challenge of protecting and managing our water resources, and resisting proposals for elimination of the public investment made in reclamation and flood control projects and in economic and environmentally sustainable electrical power production.

Mr. Floyd explains this is language that was in the existing Plan that they tried to clean up a little. It is basically saying that water resource management is becoming more and more important. There are areas within the County that has scarce ground water. We need to manage resources to meet the needs of both existing and future development in those areas, as well as managing power production.

Mr. Dorsing asks if "we" is as in individuals/residents, or will it be Federal entities dictating what will be done, even though management guidelines are set up within the County.

Mr. Floyd replies this primarily focuses on what the County can do, and what it will require of residents. As well as, what residents can do through the adoption of good management practices. It is more of a policy statement.

Discussion takes place regarding the concern of aquifers and groundwater being regulated by a higher level authority.

13.2.2.2 Surface Water

"the County receives less than 10 inches of precipitation annually"

Mr. Bailey comments that the precipitation received varies widely throughout the County, and much of the County receives considerably less. Should the statement be amended?

Mr. Floyd will change it to read *"much of the County receives less than 10 inches"*.

Ms. Drader points out that it is also covered on the precipitation map.

Discussion takes place.

13.2.2.2.1 Surface Water Quality

The way water quality is characterized has changed; this section was updated accordingly. Removed excessive detail that can be found in other documents.

13.2.2.3 Groundwater

13.2.2.3.1 Groundwater Management Areas

Will include the information being provided by EA West.

13.2.2.3.2 Groundwater Quality

13.2.3 Air

Mr. Floyd states they did not verify the existing information regarding air monitoring stations. He asks if anyone is aware of where stations could be located.

Mr. Fuglie suggests REC.

Mr. Bailey suggests Fire District #5.

13.2.4 Vegetation

13.3 CRITICAL AREAS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This entire section was updated, and simplified based upon the maps. As well as the work that has been done on the SMP and the VSP.

13.3.1 Maps and References

13.3.2 Wetlands

13.3.3 Frequently Flooded Areas

Where the areas exist, why the areas flood, what the flooding provides, type of flood systems that occur and the County's Ordinance.

There is discussion regarding the specified Ordinances no longer being relevant. This section will be updated accordingly.

13.3.4 Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

What the areas are, and where they exist.

13.3.5 Geologically Hazardous Areas

What the areas are, and where they exist. There are quite a few different hazards, so this section contains more detail.

13.3.6 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Where the habitat areas are, sage grouse, and a recovery plan.

There is discussion regarding sage grouse, and new information that has possibly been released in the last six to eight weeks. Need to make sure the most current information is being used.

Discusses Shrub-steppe being an important habitat in the County.

Ms. Dawson would like to revisit the Air Quality section. She is concerned that some of the more recent business ventures being established around the County are having an effect on the air quality, and the long term influence it could have.

Discussion takes place.

Mr. Hooper states that they could generically acknowledge that there are new and emerging air quality concerns to consider.

Columbia River

Banks Lake

Potholes Reservoir

Other Water Bodies

Provides information concerning conserving ground where there are opportunities to do so, providing continued education on habitat benefits, and the sources of information used when creating the maps.

13.3.7 Cultural Resource Areas

Importance and requirements to protect cultural resources

13.3.8 Voluntary Stewardship Program

This is a new section that was added due to the County now having the Voluntary Stewardship Program, to protect critical areas located on agricultural land, in place.

13.4 SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM

Removed old information and added information that has already been approved.

13.5 FIRE HAZARDS

The threats of a fire and susceptibility, the August 2017 five hundred acre wildfire sparked in Quincy and resources available for fire hazard education and prevention.

The goals and policies making up the remainder of the chapter were deleted, and are now part of an earlier chapter.

Mr. Floyd explains the Critical Areas and Cultural Resources code is typically updated after the Comp Plan, but since it is known that it has to be done, it made sense to update it along with the Comp Plan. It was made to be consistent with the latest science information out of the SMP. Only the areas that were changed will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 24.08 CRITICAL AREAS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Article I General Provisions

Minimal changes.

24.08.010 Authorization and Purpose

24.08.020 Categorization of Critical Areas

24.08.030 Applicability and Authorization Required

24.08.040 Relationship to Other Regulations

24.08.050 Jurisdictional Substitution and Coordination

24.08.060 General Exemptions

24.08.070 General Review Procedures

24.08.080 Resource Information and Maps

24.08.090 Critical Areas Assessments – General Requirements

24.08.100 Variances

24.08.110 Reasonable Use Exception

24.08.010 Penalties and Enforcement

Article II General Mitigation Requirements

24.08.150 General Mitigation Standards

Added “Any approval of mitigation to compensate for impacts on a critical area or its buffer shall be supported by the best available science.” This language was taken straight out of the WAC.

24.08.160 Mitigation

More detail about mitigation was added to allow the Administrative Official more specificity. This is all language that was approved in the Critical Areas portion of the SMP. Addressed mitigation sequencing,

general requirements, restoration/rehabilitation when temporary impacts occur and compensation. The mitigation ratios were updated. Added information to provide for flexibility.

24.08.170 Buffers

24.08.180 Mitigation Security

24.08.190 Protection of Designated Critical Areas

Article III Wetlands

24.08.200 Identification and Designation

24.08.210 Maps and References

Added additional references.

24.08.220 Classification

Updated the classifications.

24.08.230 Site Assessment Requirements

Added a reference to WAC 173-22-035, a requirement to describe the species within a wetland.

24.08.240 Alteration of Wetlands

Deleted outdated information related to wetland rating and dimensional threshold. Added a reference to the Ecology Stormwater Manual for Eastern Washington.

24.08.250 Protection Standards

To be consistent with the SMP, updated information related to rating and scoring of wetlands, and the application of mitigation. Added information about trails (there is discussion related to the location of trails), and stormwater management facilities

24.08.260 Mitigation

Added language related to the Mitigation Plan. Updated the mitigation ratios.

Article IV Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Not a lot of changes to this section.

24.08.300 Identification and Designation

24.08.310 Maps and References

24.08.320 Site Assessment Requirements

24.08.340 Protection Standards

Added a riparian buffer width table.

There is discussion regarding how involved the Department of Fish and Wildlife has been in the updating of regulations, and how receptive they have been to the changes.

Added information from the SMP related to stream crossings, trails, utilities and native vegetation landscaping.

Mr. Bailey asks Mr. Fuglie if the information had been reviewed by the PUD.

Discussion follows.

It is decided that PUD engineers and Jeff Tincher, of Public Works, will review the added language.

24.08.350 Mitigation

24.08.360 Habitat Management Plan

Article V Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

Minimal changes.

24.08.400 Identification and Designation

24.08.410 Maps and References

24.08.420 Site Assessment Requirements

24.08.430 Protection Standards

24.08.440 Mitigation

Article VI Geologically Hazardous Areas

Minimal changes.

24.08.500 Identification and Designation

24.08.510 Applicability

24.08.520 Maps and References

24.08.530 Site Assessment Requirements

24.08.540 Protection Standards

24.08.550 Mitigation

Article VII Frequently Flooded Areas

Minimal changes.

24.08.600 Identification and Designation

24.08.610 Maps and References

24.08.620 Site Assessment Requirements

24.08.630 Protection Standards

Article VIII Cultural Resources

Minimal changes.

24.08.700 Identification and Designation

24.08.710 Maps and References

24.08.720 Site Assessment Requirements

Mr. Hooper asks if there is new guidance to suggest that 500 feet was the appropriate distance.

Mr. Floyd explains this was one of the changes made in the SMP based on comments made by DAHP, but there is flexibility in cultural resources.

Mr. Hooper would prefer to continue with 300 feet.

Discussion ensues, and the threshold will remain at 300 feet.

Information was added related to a Cultural Resource Management Plan.

24.08.730 Protection Standards

CHAPTER 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

6.2 GRANT COUNTY'S ECONOMIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE

6.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS – AN ECONOMIC PROFILE OF GRANT COUNTY

Food processing provides 43% of the manufacturing jobs. Lists major producers.

Population

Labor force and employment

The importance of agriculture.

Top Five Employment Sectors in Grant County (Table 6-1)

Agriculture is #1 providing 10,000 jobs.

Manufacturing is #3 at 12.5%.

Mr. Dorsing asks, with the development that is taking place in some of the industrial areas, are they comfortable with that percentage. Manufacturing is gaining ground on agriculture. Is there any change anticipated to the numbers?

Mr. Floyd explains, the numbers shown are current for 2017. The document talks about the industrial areas, the recent growth and the potential for growth.

Discussion takes place.

Mr. Hooper comments this section may have to be buffed out some.

Personal Income

Top Five Payroll Industries in Grant County (Table 6-2)

6.3.1 Composition of Grant County's Economic Base

Agriculture

Agricultural Activity and Products (Private Lands) (Table 6-3)

Manufacturing

Largest Manufacturing Employers (Table 6-4)

Mr. Bailey comments he does not see any reference to the fruit industry (processing or packing) in the table.

El Oro Agrib Beef's Product or Service is listed as Cattle Feed. He questions if that is the term that should be used.

This will be corrected to Cattle Feeding/Finishing or Feedlot.

Wahluke Produce in Mattawa "See" should be corrected to "Seed" (*Agricultural Seed Processing*).

D & L Foundry, Inc's Product or Service is listed as Manhole Cover. They produce a variety of cast iron products, much more than just manhole covers.

This will be corrected to Cast Iron Foundry Manufacturing.

Mr. Floyd states this table is according to the Economic Development Council dataset. These were the top manufacturing employers.

Mr. Bailey comments the fruit packing/processing plants, in aggregate, are an important part of the AG economy, and should be recognized as such.

Discussion takes place.

Agricultural Services

Transportation and Utilities

Mr. Fuglie refers to page 17, and comments that the information is probably not accurate.

Mr. Floyd replies they struggled with the PUD section update.

6.3.2 Changing Composition of Employment

Recent AG employment trends and manufacturing.

Mr. Floyd reports the old text talked about Genie. Are there other major changes or new industry that should be highlighted?

Discussion takes place. Nothing new will be added.

6.3.3 Workforce in Grant County

Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment (Table 6-5)

Discussion related to the labor shortage.

6.3.4 Stagnant Real Earnings

Mr. Floyd asks if this title still fits this section.

It will remain as is.

Per Capital Income in Grant County, Washington State and US (Figure 6-5)

Grant County wages are below, but tend to follow the State's wages.

Mr. Bailey states he is comfortable with the data.

There is discussion.

6.4 MAJOR ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Brief discussion takes place regarding the following sentence: "*Strategic economic development planning is a process of evaluation and decision-making to help establish and meet objectives by aiding the development of a strategy for achieving and marshalling its resources for implementation.*"

Mr. Floyd states the sentence will be revisited and reworded.

This section received a fair amount of updating. They performed an analyses of the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths

A substantial resource endowment

A growing agricultural-related complex

A first-rate transportation network

Significant cost advantage in doing business

Quality of life factors and relative low cost-of-living

Presence in the global economy

Export Opportunities

H-2A and other temporary farm worker housing and labor supply

Grant County's rich cultural history

Reasonably well-positioned for expansion within emerging industries

A growing reputation for local cooperation in economic development

Mr. Floyd asks if there are any other strengths that should be added to the list.

Weaknesses

Limited capacity for wastewater treatment and water distribution facilities in certain areas

Limited legal mandate to influence some areas of economic development policy

Limited retail growth in many communities

Mr. Bailey would like to add not being able to provide skilled labor for industries wishing to expand in to Grant County as a weakness.

Ms. Drader would like to add a lack in tourism and recreational development, which would possibly draw companies to Grant County, as a weakness.

Mr. Dorsing comments not having an air service to transport people in and out of the area is a handicap.

Mr. Fuglie comments that recreation activities are hampered by the recreation areas not being located near the amenities.

Discussion takes place.

Opportunities

Internationalization of the local economy

Increased technology-oriented economic development

Trained labor force

Value-added agricultural products

Broad state government commitment to rural economic development.

Increased cost for development in Puget Sound

Increased orientation toward leisure and recreation

Growth in retirees

Columbia Basin Project

General discussion related to a few of the listed opportunities.

Threats

Farm labor supply

Mr. Floyd thinks this should read: "*Farm and other labor supply*". It will be amended to read as such.

Ms. Drader comments aeronautical or air is mentioned under the assets. The Grant County International airport has one of the longest runways west of the Mississippi, and is a long term asset.

Mr. Richards explains a study is currently underway with the hopes of restoring air service.

Mr. Floyd will add the airport as one of the County's strengths.

Removal of dams on Columbia-Snake River system

Mr. Floyd asks if this should be left in. It is a carryover from the existing Plan, but is still a threat today. The Planning Commission agrees it should remain in the Plan. It should be recognized as a threat to the County.

PUD dams and transmission/distribution infrastructure

Challenges in meeting transmission and distribution needs, and the recent Wanapum Dam repair.

Mr. Floyd encourages Mr. Fuglie to review this section, and let him know if he has any additional information.

6.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

6.5.1 Option 1: Attract New Employers

6.5.2 Option 2: Cultivate Home-Grown and Start-Up Businesses

6.5.3 Option 3: Diversify the Existing Economic Base

6.5.4 Option 4: Promote Grant County as a Destination for Tourists

6.5.5 Option 5: Promote Local Retail Opportunities

6.5.6 Option 6: Increase Educational Opportunities

Mr. Hooper reports that prior to the February 7th workshop there will be two public hearings for proposed Code amendments. The complete compiled draft Plan will be reviewed as time will allow.

Mr. Fuglie asks when Mr. Floyd would like to have the additional comments.

Mr. Floyd replies they would like to have the comments by the end of next week.

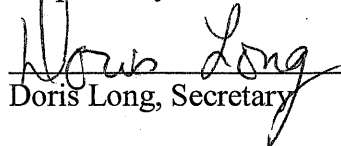
In February the draft version will be issued to the State Department of Commerce for a 60 day review. The SEPA review will be completed in March. They are on schedule for the Planning Commission to hold their public hearing in May, the Board of County Commissioners in June, and, hopefully the updated Comprehensive plan will be adopted by the end of June.

Mr. Hooper states Mr. Floyd will be conducting his portion of the February 7th meeting by Webex, but the Planning Commission members will need to be present to hear the two project specific items that will be presented.

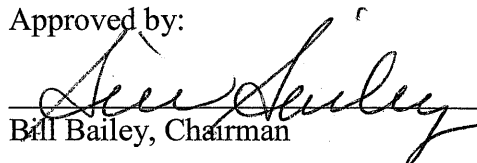
There is general closing discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted:


Doris Long, Secretary

Approved by:


Bill Bailey, Chairman